



State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

**Testimony in Support of
Senate Bill Number 263
Veterans' Affairs Committee
Thursday, March 3, 2016**

Chairmen Hennessy and Flexer, Ranking Members Yaccarino and Martin, and Members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we would like to thank the Committee for raising **Senate Bill Number 263, An Act Concerning Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources for Veterans and Members of the Armed Forces**. The House Republican Caucus stands in strong support of this legislation.

Too often, our veterans returning home will face periods of depression, anxiety, or other mental health ailments. Additionally, these honorable men and women are reported to have excessive rates of suicide well above the national average. This bill seeks to address these issues by requiring the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services alongside the Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs to study mental health and suicide prevention programs available to veterans in our state. This collaborative effort will provide a comprehensive understanding of all the services available to veterans through state agencies, community organizations, and non-profit entities.

Every session, we debate various ways to better serve the veterans who so selflessly serve us. One of the most important actions we can take, is to ensure that the best possible network of mental health services is in place to take care of them as they return home from war.

We are confident this committee and this legislature can come together on a bi-partisan basis to assist our veterans as they transition from military to civilian life. Indeed, the challenges they face are daunting. It is our job to fully understand these issues and explore the best possible ways to treat them.

Once again, thank you for raising this bill and for considering our testimony.